



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Aistear

Creatchuraclam na Luath-Óige  
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Prepared by the National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)  
2024

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## Foreword from the Minister for Education

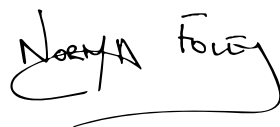
The publication of the updated *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is an important milestone for the Early Learning and Care sector, given the many developments since its groundbreaking publication in 2009 as the first early childhood curriculum framework. The significance of the formative early childhood phase of learning and development is emphasised in both international and national research. We understand that nurturing young children's interest and love for learning is vitally important for their wellbeing, development and for their lifelong learning experiences.

The timely updating of *Aistear* reflects societal changes, an increasingly qualified and professional workforce in the early childhood sector, shifts in policy and developments in research alongside the changes in the lived experiences of babies, toddlers and young children. The updating was led by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), in close collaboration with the Early Learning and Care sector. An innovative part of the updating process was consultation with babies, toddlers and young children.

Greater emphasis has been placed on experiences that support children's creativity and their engagement with the arts, emergent literacy and numeracy, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and continued recognition of the crucial role of play-based learning. A core objective of the updated *Aistear* is to promote the use of Gaeilge in the everyday language of educators as they interact with babies, toddlers and young children and I warmly welcome this inclusion and its acknowledgement of our rich, cultural and linguistic history.

*Aistear* can be used by all those who support babies, toddlers and young children's learning and particularly those who work in professional roles as early years' educators. Whilst the updated Framework, is no longer designed specifically for use in junior and senior infant classes, it does have relevance in terms of the pedagogical approaches used. I'm especially pleased that *Aistear* has been aligned with the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DoE, 2023) as this promotes important continuity in children's learning and experiences as they move between educational settings.

Finally, I wish to thank the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and his officials for the collaborative engagement with my Department and the NCCA in this important development. I look forward to continued work together as we support the early learning and care sector with its ongoing implementation.



**Norma Foley TD**

Minister for Education



## Foreword from the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

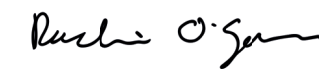
During early childhood babies, toddlers and young children are learning and developing at a pace that exceeds any other stage in their lives. This is a period of great opportunity for laying important foundations for future learning and wellbeing. In early childhood, babies, toddlers and young children learn through play, fun, exploration and conversation within loving, trusting and respectful relationships. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* promotes a view of babies, toddlers and young children as agentic, competent and confident learners within loving and respectful relationships. The Framework celebrates early childhood as a time of being, and of enjoying and learning from early experiences, as they unfold.

Since *Aistear* was first published much has changed both in the early learning and care sector and in society more broadly. The Framework can continue to be used by anyone who supports babies', toddlers' and young children's learning and development such as parents, childminders and early years educators. I want to acknowledge the commitment of educators and childminders in implementing *Aistear* to date; they play a significant role in promoting high quality early learning experiences for young children in different learning environments.

I warmly welcome the strong emphasis within the Framework on the voice of babies, toddlers and young children, and I welcome the key role they played in shaping the updates to *Aistear*. Mirroring the development of the original Framework, a collaborative process has ensured the updated Framework is in line with commitments in *First 5, the Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028*, and that *Aistear* will continue to reflect and support the lives of children and their families for many years to come.

I am also very pleased that the Framework strengthens the focus on children's rights, slow relational pedagogy, diversity and inclusion, outdoor learning, wellbeing, and sustainability. The inclusion of words, phrases and proverbs as *Gaeilge* through the Framework acknowledges that our language, identity and belonging are closely intertwined.

I would like to thank the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) for its leadership in this work and the organisations, agencies and researchers who contributed to the updating of *Aistear*. Particular thanks to the many educators, parents and babies, toddlers and young children around the country who offered their views and insights as the work progressed. Finally, thank you to the Minister for Education and her officials for our collaborative working. The continued partnership between the Department of Children, the Department of Education, the NCCA and the early learning and care sector will be important as all work together to ensure that the ongoing implementation of the Framework continues to support high-quality early learning and care experiences for all babies, toddlers and young children.



**Roderic O'Gorman TD**

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth





## Introduction

*Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was first published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in 2009.

*Aistear* was the first curriculum framework for early childhood education in Ireland. It celebrates early childhood as a time of being, a time for enjoying and learning from experiences as they unfold, and laying important foundations for later learning and for life. Because early childhood marks the beginning of babies, toddlers and young children's lifelong learning journeys, the Framework is called *Aistear*, the Irish word for journey.

An update of the Framework was undertaken to recognise and reflect societal and policy changes that have taken place since the publication of the original Framework. The update was also undertaken to reflect the pace of educational research since the late 2000s and the new learning this gave rise to about how babies, toddlers and young children learn and develop and how educators can enrich and encourage this appropriately. It is envisaged that this updated Framework will continue to support and enrich babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development. The updated Framework is supported by the *Guidance for Good Practice*. The Guidance builds on the original *Guidelines for Good Practice* (NCCA, 2009) and supports educators to understand and engage with new concepts introduced in the updated Framework. The use of digital technologies to support babies, toddlers and young children's learning will be promoted in line with Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Department of Education and wider policy.

During early childhood, babies, toddlers and young children are learning and developing at a pace that exceeds that of any other stage in their lives. This period, especially the first three years, sets the foundation for learning, *sláinte* (health), and the formation of important connections in the brain. It is during this time that babies, toddlers and young children can also develop positive dispositions towards learning. *Aistear* acknowledges that these early experiences have a formative impact that can last throughout their whole lives and provides information to enhance the early learning and development of babies, toddlers and young children.

In early childhood, babies, toddlers and young children learn through loving, trusting and respectful relationships, and through *súgradh* (play), *spraoi* (fun), exploration and *comhrá* (conversation) in multimodal ways. *Aistear* emphasises the centrality of family, languages, *meitheal* (community spirit of coming together) and cultures in babies, toddlers and young children's lives.

The Framework can be used by anyone who supports babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development. In *Aistear* those using the Framework, including parents, childminders and early years educators are referred to as 'educators'. Each educator comes to *Aistear* informed by their relationship with the baby, toddler and young child, the family, their knowledge and experience, as well as knowing the features of the different learning environments (Figure 1).

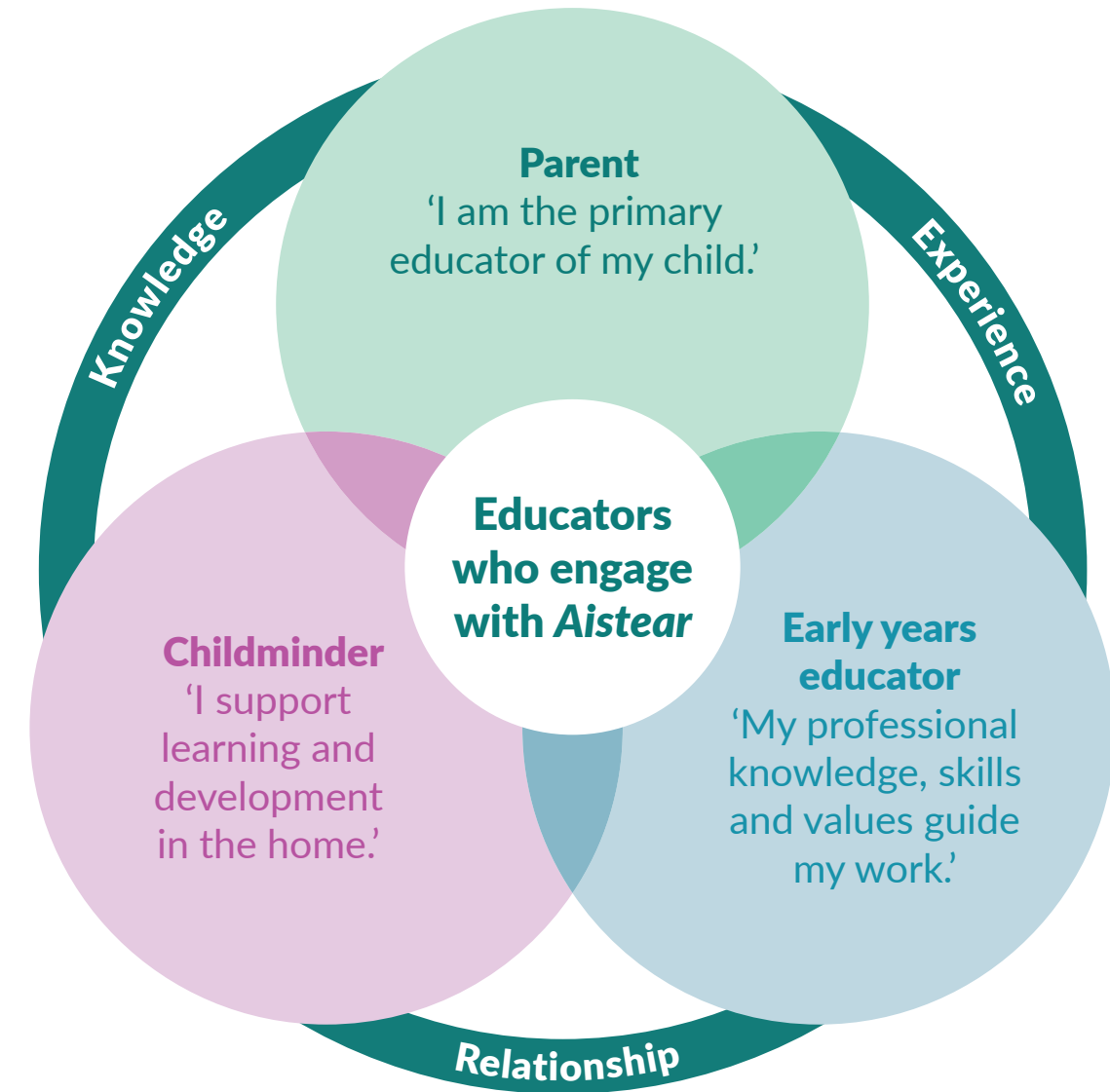


Figure 1: Educators who engage with *Aistear*

*Aistear* is the curriculum framework for all children from birth to six years in all settings other than primary and special schools. It aligns with the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (Department of Education [DoE], 2023) which is for all children in primary and special schools.

Aistear presents early childhood through three overlapping age ranges. These reflect the differences in how babies, toddlers and young children progress as their learning and development is unique, complex and holistic. The three overlapping age groupings

represent the distinct stages of development in early childhood while acknowledging the individuality of each baby, toddler and young child. Aistear recognises the importance of each distinct stage in its own right.

**The overlapping age groupings are:**

**Babies**  
(aged from birth to 18 months)

**Toddlers**  
(12 months to 3 years)

**Young children**  
(2.5 – 6 years)

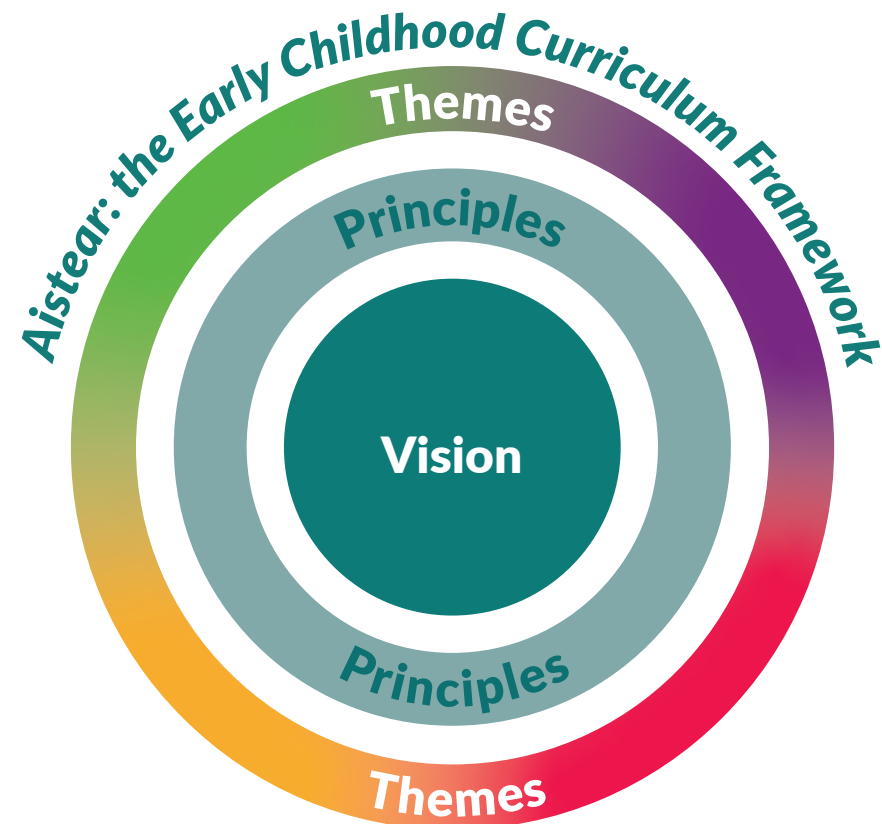


Figure 2: Aistear's Structure

## Vision

Aistear empowers educators to develop a curriculum to support the learning and development of babies, toddlers and young children in their care. It promotes *meas* (respect) for babies, toddlers and young children. It guides the development of an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum in which *súgradh* (play) and relationships are foundational. Aistear presents a view of babies, toddlers and young children as agentic, competent and confident. It highlights how the educator's view of the baby, toddler and young child is central in helping them reach their individual potential.

Aistear highlights the importance of partnerships and collaborations between educators, babies, toddlers, young children, families and communities. This helps ensure that every baby, toddler and young child can thrive and flourish and contribute to a more sustainable world by caring for themselves, others and the environment. The Vision supports creative and independent learning and development of babies, toddlers and young children facilitated and supported by educators who respect their diversity and care about them.



## Image of the baby, toddler and young child

Aistear presents babies, toddlers and young children as agentic, competent and confident. Being agentic means they have voice and influence over their own learning. Their agency is evident in the way they practically and emotionally transform the lives of those around them. They influence relationships, decisions and the workings of their social worlds.



## Image of the educator

Aistear presents the educator as agentic, competent, confident and reflective. Being agentic means that the educator has the freedom to use their knowledge and skills to interpret Aistear to support learning and development.



Babies, toddlers and young children learn and develop within loving relationships where their individual life stories are acknowledged with kindness and consideration. Each individual baby, toddler and young child learns and develops in their own time and in their own unique way. Aistear takes a strengths-based approach and sees the potential in every baby, toddler and young child.



Educators hold a genuine belief in the competencies of babies, toddlers and young children and hold them in a respectful and protective space. They know the value of their role as advocates for the rights of babies, toddlers and young children. In doing so they also demonstrate and celebrate the importance of early childhood education and care.

## Purpose

The purpose of *Aistear* is to support babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development. In doing this, *Aistear*:

- identifies what and how babies, toddlers and young children should learn through the development of a rights-based, emergent and inquiry-based curriculum
- promotes partnerships, collaborations and connections with babies, toddlers and young children's families and communities
- makes connections and supports continuity of experiences and progression in babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development
- guides, enhances and extends existing curriculum approaches
- promotes the cultural and linguistic identity of all babies, toddlers and young children by affirming and supporting diversity, including Irish cultural and linguistic history and *scéal* (story)
- informs practice across a range of settings, disciplines and professions, and encourages interdisciplinary work and dialogue through a shared image of the baby, toddler and young child.



## Principles of Early Learning and Development

*Aistear* is based on nine Principles of early learning and development. These are the foundation of the Framework and bring the curriculum vision to life (Figure 3). They are also embedded throughout the Framework's Theme descriptors, Aims and Learning Goals, and in the *Guidance for Good Practice*.

Each Principle is presented using a short paragraph. This is followed by an interpretation of the Principle from the perspective of babies, toddlers and young children. This interpretation highlights the educator's role in facilitating voice and influence in early learning and development as well as advocating for and enacting the Principles in practice.

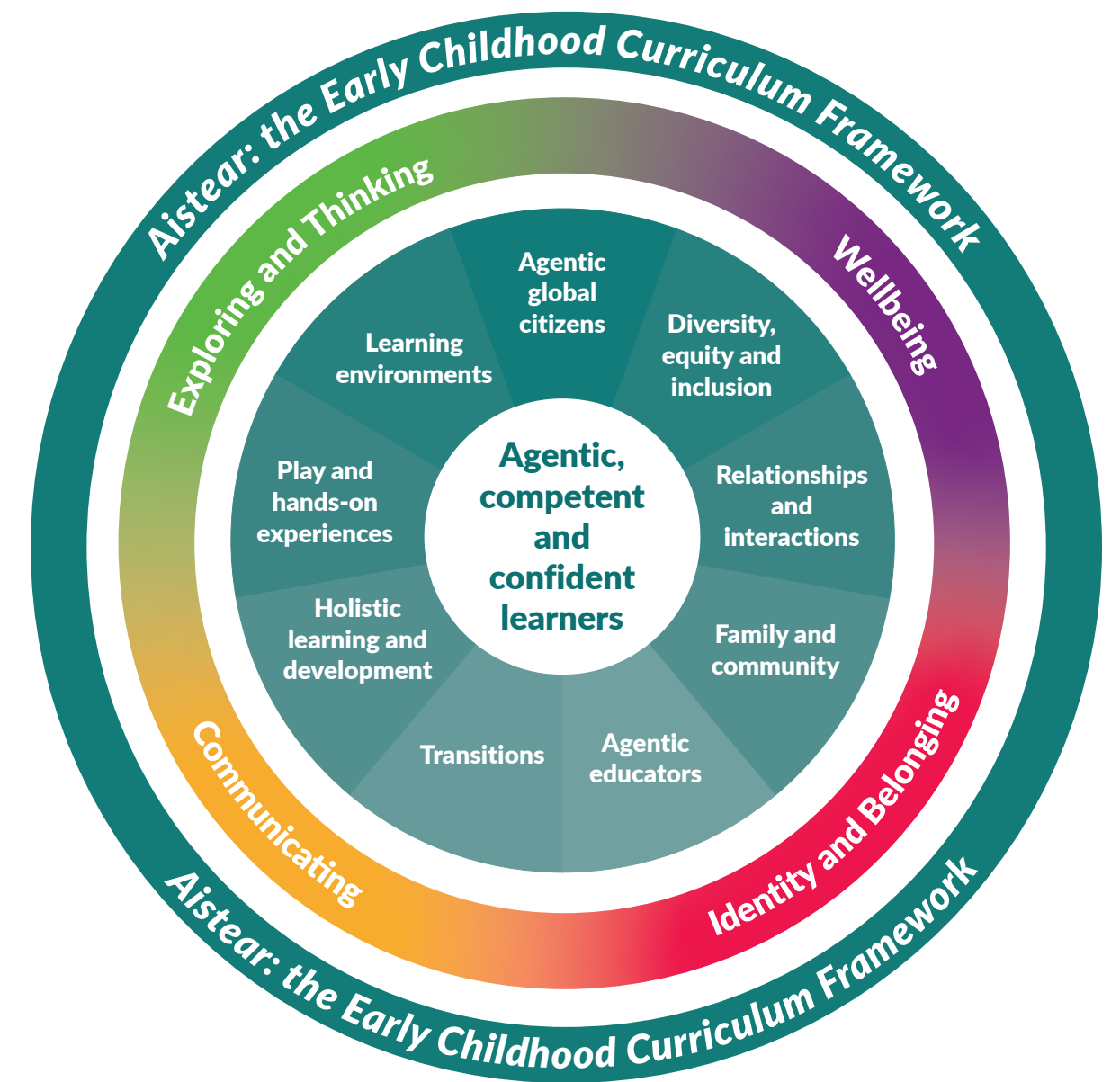


Figure 3: *Aistear*'s Content

## Agentic Global Citizens

Babies, toddlers and young children are competent, confident and agentic global citizens. Being agentic means they have voice and influence and that they can make choices about and in their learning. Babies, toddlers and young children have the right to be cared for, nurtured and supported to grow and develop. They can experience democracy by having their voice heard and respected by educators who support active participation. Listening to and learning to respect others and their views is a key part of this. As citizens of the world, babies, toddlers and young children have deep connections with people and the environment, valuing justice and human rights.

“ I am an agentic global citizen and use my ‘voice’ to show you what is important to me – notice, nurture and respectfully respond to me so I can be independent and make choices. ”

“ I have the right to be protected from physical and emotional harm and to know that you will help me when I need it. ”

“ I have emerging responsibilities to care for myself, others and for the environment. Provide meaningful opportunities for me to live sustainably. ”

“ Support me to understand and respect my home languages and to value the views, opinions, cultures, languages, religions and experiences that are different from mine. Empower me to learn about and value the languages, histories, stories, folklore and culture of Ireland, including those of the Traveller community. ”

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

All babies, toddlers and young children have the right to equality of opportunity, to be treated fairly and without discrimination. They have the right to access and participate meaningfully in experiences to fulfil their potential as unique individuals. Equity in early childhood is about fairness in addressing any challenges that a baby, toddler or young child might experience because of their background or ability. Diversity of self, family, *baile* (home) and community are respected and celebrated while also noticing and valuing our similarities and connectedness. Inclusion means each baby, toddler and young child is supported, empowered and enabled to participate and progress in meaningful early childhood experiences.

“ Recognise my abilities, identities, needs and individual potential and respect my right to belong in the learning environment. Put supports in place so that I am empowered to participate and contribute in a meaningful way. ”

“ Notice, nurture and celebrate me as I grow and develop. ”

“ My family, culture(s), home-language(s) and ethnicity are what make me who I am. Acknowledge and respect me. Celebrate appropriately and value me, my family and my community. ”

“ Help me to learn to recognise and challenge injustice and to stand up for myself and others in our local, national and global communities. ”

## Relationships and Interactions

Babies, toddlers and young children’s fundamental need to be with others is embedded in caring connections within loving and responsive relationships. A slow relational pedagogy affords time and space to be with the baby, toddler and young child to build a secure attachment. Reciprocal relationships can have a profound impact on learning and development and the key person approach is central to this. Early friendships with other babies, toddlers and young children are noticed, nurtured and celebrated. Great care and time are taken to foster and support connections within and between the baby, toddler and young child’s social worlds. The importance of sustained one-to-one interactions, especially for babies, through daily rituals and care-giving moments are valued and nurtured.

“ I need time, *meas* (respect), freedom and space to be by myself and with others – family, *cairde* (friends), peers and educators. It is also good for me to know others in my local community. ”

“ I have strong, secure attachments with the important people in my life who take time to know me and be with me. They and I recognise the value of a slow, relational and respectful pedagogy. ”

“ Help me to co-regulate and self-regulate my emotions and help me to learn to be with others, to handle conflict and to solve problems. ”

“ I enjoy it when my friendships are noticed, nurtured and celebrated. ”

## Family and Community

The lives of babies, toddlers and young children are enriched by those who nurture and care for them. This includes parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, step-parents, legal guardians, carers, extended family, educators and community members. In turn, babies, toddlers and young children bring joy, *dóchas* (hope) and *sonas* (happiness) to enrich the lives of others. Babies, toddlers and young children’s funds of knowledge from *baile* (home), family and community connections impact on and inform their learning experiences. Sharing their funds of knowledge supports their identity and sense of belonging in the setting. These connections influence understandings of diversity of place, routines, family, culture(s) and language(s).

“ My family are the most important people in my life. ”

“ It helps me to reach my individual potential when my key person works in partnership with my family, respecting and valuing their opinions and expertise. They want the best for me and know about me and what I like and don’t like. ”

“ I want to share my funds of knowledge about me, my family, culture(s), experiences and celebrations with you and my *cairde* (friends). We can share our languages, cultural skills, song, music, dance and *scéal* (story) with each other. ”

“ My extended family and my community are really important to me. Recognise these connections as part of my identity and belonging. ”

## Agentic Educators

Agentic educators support and facilitate learning through a respectful regard for each baby, toddler and young child's uniqueness and rights, guided by a slow relational pedagogy. This respectful relationship between the baby, toddler, young child, their key person and other important people in their lives creates a circle of security and trust within and between learning environments. Being agentic means that the educator has the freedom to use their knowledge and skills to interpret *Aistear* to support learning and development. By creating time and space, educators notice, nurture, respond and reflect on babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development.

“ I know you respect me as a unique global citizen with my own life story. I feel *sona* (happy) and secure in your company and I want you to feel *sona* (happy) and to enjoy my company too. ”

“ I thrive when you recognise and build on my identity, abilities, interests and experiences. You know the different ways I learn and develop and provide relevant, culturally appropriate and meaningful experiences to help me reach my individual potential. ”

“ I trust that you will notice what I need and support me and my family to have equality of access to professional support and services when I need it. ”

“ It helps me when you are aware of your biases and those of others and that you protect me and my family if I am being hurt or discriminated against. ”

## Transitions

Babies, toddlers and young children participate in transitions within and between the daily routines, from one room to another and from one educational setting to another. They also move between *baile* (home) and other places where they spend time. All transitions are important and are recognised as a process that takes time rather than a once-off event. During transitions ensuring progression in learning and development and continuity of experiences requires consistent relationships. This includes a particular emphasis on the role of the key person and on slow relational pedagogy. Supporting transitions also requires shared responsibility between families, childminders, educators, settings and schools in the best interests of the baby, toddler and young child. Free play and playful pedagogies ensure that relevant and meaningful experiences make transitions and progression of learning more enjoyable, positive and effective.

“ I experience lots of transitions: from *baile* (home) to the early childhood setting; moving within and between the routines of the day; progressing from room-to-room; moving from one setting to another, and starting primary or special school. Change is easier when I feel safe and have people around who care about and know me. ”

“ Learn about me and know what I need to make my transitions as positive, enjoyable and effective as they can be. Talk with me and my family who care for me – they know me best. ”

“ I am an agentic, competent and confident learner – notice and respond to how I am developing dispositions, attitudes, values, skills, knowledge and understanding. ”

“ Help me to reach my individual potential by noticing, nurturing and responding to my learning and development. Share information about me to support progression in my learning and development. ”

## Holistic Learning and Development

Early learning and development is holistic as babies, toddlers and young children learn many different things at the same time. What they learn is connected to where, how and with whom they learn. On-going assessment of what babies, toddlers and young children do, make and communicate helps educators plan for a rich variety of relevant, meaningful and hands-on learning experiences. Educators develop an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum through a blend of free-play, guided play and educator-led playful experiences and provocations. This provides choice, opportunity and progression of learning and development. Through such experiences, babies, toddlers and young children develop a strong sense of wellbeing, of *bród* (pride) in self, family and community. They become competent and confident communicators and develop as curious and resilient explorers and thinkers.

“ When supporting my learning and development, remember that what and how I learn is shaped by me and my funds of knowledge, and developed by my previous learning and experiences with my family, my community and wider society. ”

“ It helps me when you notice what I am doing and learning and when we have time to be together. By being with me and understanding my ‘voice’ you can see my individual potential as a learner and identify what I am interested in, what I am good at and things that I might need extra help with. ”

“ I have my own creative thoughts, ideas and imaginings – notice, nurture and respond to these. ”

“ Through *súgradh* (play) and hands-on learning experiences indoors and outdoors, I start to understand and express my feelings and emotions, to develop as an explorer, thinker and communicator, to develop physically, socially and creatively, to be well and to have a strong sense of identity and belonging. ”

## Play and Hands-on Experiences

Babies, toddlers and young children have a right to play. Much of their learning and development takes place through *súgradh* (play) and hands-on experiences through which they learn about the world around them. Through free-play, guided play and educator-led playful experiences, babies, toddlers and young children can immerse themselves in deep learning and joyful explorations. Educators notice the learning when they slow things down and create time, freedom and space for *súgradh* (play) and interactions. These playful, hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences help babies, toddlers and young children to co-regulate and self-regulate their emotions. They also help them to have a sense of self, to develop as thinkers and language users, to develop socially and emotionally and to have empathy and compassion. *Súgradh* (Play) helps them to be *sláinte* (healthy) and *sona* (happy), creative and imaginative, and lays the foundations for becoming effective communicators and explorers.

“ I want to play, and I have a right to play. ”

“ It is important for my learning and development to have the time, space, provocations and resources to play. ”

“ I learn by being active and using my senses to explore and learn about the world. I need access to open-ended and natural materials to help me explore, be creative and use my imagination. ”

“ I benefit from enjoyable, meaningful, challenging and adventurous play indoors and outdoors. This helps me to progress in my learning and to assess risk which is a valuable skill for me throughout life. ”

## Learning Environments

The inclusive learning environment is understood as the physical space and resources provided indoors and outdoors. It also includes the daily routines, the transitions, and the relationships and interactions. The learning environment has a profound influence on how babies, toddlers and young children feel and learn when it provides for different types of *súgradh* (play) and hands-on experiences and interactions. Through consultation and collaboration, babies, toddlers, young children and educators plan and create aesthetically pleasing, challenging and inclusive spaces. Together they assess the learning environment to ensure equality of access for all, noticing how babies, toddlers and young children communicate their level of comfort and ease in that space. Educators also embrace possibilities in the local environment through a sense of *ómós áite* (value of place) and place-based learning. There is an emphasis on *dúlra* (nature), natural spaces, provocations and resources. There is also a commitment to sustainability and active, adventurous play.

“ I benefit from learning in my locality. Being in and learning about *dúlra* (nature) is important as I have a responsibility to care for myself and others. Help me to care for my environment and to live sustainably. ”

“ Involve me in making an environment where I can be independent, express myself, make choices and interact with others. ”

“ My environment needs to be inviting, accessible, inclusive, safe yet challenging, empowering and connected. I like being in spaces that allow me freedom of movement indoors and outdoors as much as possible. I benefit from being outside in all kinds of weather. ”

“ I have a right to see myself, my family, my community and my culture(s) represented in the play resources, books and mark-making materials provided. Through the learning environment, I develop an understanding of myself and of others. ”

“ I benefit from learning in my locality. Being in and learning about *dúlra* (nature) is important as I have a responsibility to care for myself and others. Help me to care for my environment and to live sustainably. ”

## Themes

Aistear presents babies, toddlers and young children’s learning and development using four interconnected Themes, underpinned by the Vision and Principles.

The Themes are:

- **Wellbeing**
- **Identity and Belonging**
- **Communicating**
- **Exploring and Thinking.**

Each Theme describes what babies, toddlers and young children learn. Each Theme description is followed by four Aims which set out broad aspirations for learning and development. Each Aim is underpinned by three Learning Goals.

These are broad yet observable statements that bring important dispositions, attitudes and values along with skills, knowledge and understanding to life. The Themes are there to inform planning for babies, toddlers and young children’s learning and to support the documenting and assessing of their progress and achievements. By interpreting the Aims and Learning Goals, educators notice learning and empower babies, toddlers and young children to continue learning and developing. Babies, toddlers and young children are supported to reach their individual potential through participation in an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum, underpinned by play, in meaningful and enjoyable ways.

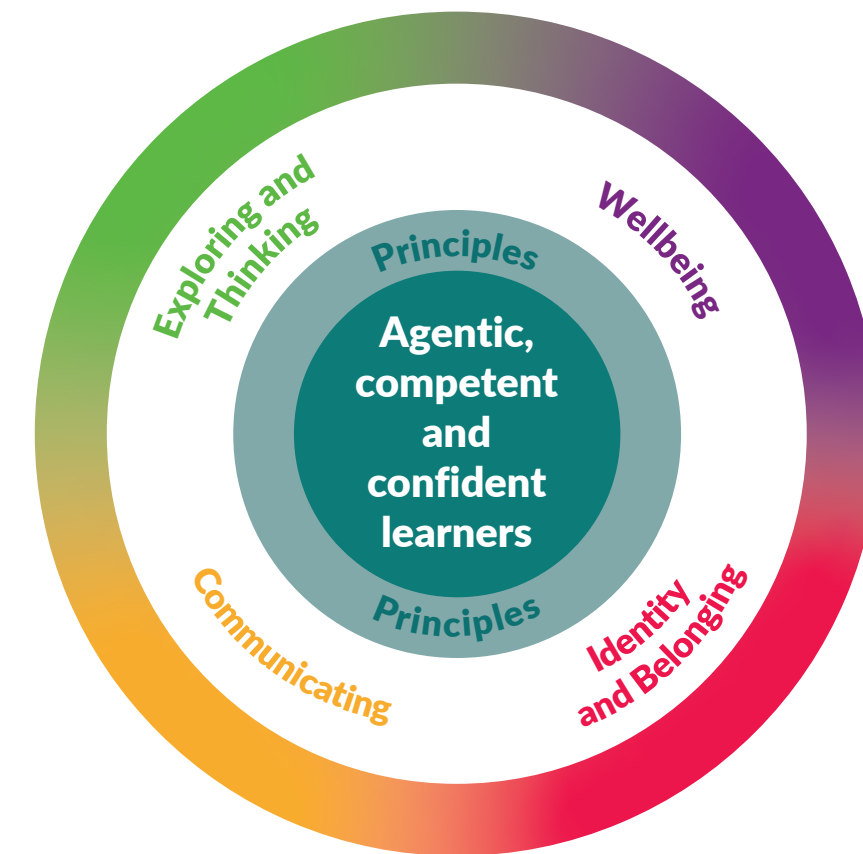


Figure 4: The Themes of Aistear

## Wellbeing

**The Theme of Wellbeing is about babies, toddlers and young children being confident, *sona* (happy) and healthy.**

Wellbeing focuses on developing babies, toddlers and young children's psychological wellbeing (including feeling and thinking) and physical wellbeing.

Positive relationships and interactions contribute significantly to the wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children. Family, educators, the key person, *cairde* (friends) and community members all play a role in enhancing babies, toddlers and young children's sense of wellbeing, *sonas* (happiness), attachment and *meitheal* (community spirit of coming together). Building these relationships through embracing a slow relational pedagogy supports babies, toddlers and young children to feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, included and agentic. Having opportunities for play and hands-on experiences, expressing themselves creatively through the arts and experiencing a spiritual dimension in life enhances babies, toddlers and young children's wellbeing. These provide opportunities for them to enhance their sense of *ionadh* (wonder), awe, stillness, ritual, gratitude and to get enjoyment from life. Educators also support babies, toddlers and young children to understand, express, recognise and co-regulate and self-regulate emotions, to develop empathy and compassion towards self and others. When supported and loved by significant people in their lives, babies, toddlers and young children can be empowered to be resilient and to build a bank of resources to help cope with life's challenges.

Physical *sláinte* (health) is an important aspect of wellbeing and includes learning to make healthy choices about nutrition, routines, rest and sleep, hygiene, exercise, movement, *súgradh* (play) and relationships. It is also about developing an awareness of their bodies as they grow and develop, including bodily autonomy and consent.

Physical wellbeing enables babies, toddlers and young children to explore, to investigate, to be adventurous, be agentic, be creative, to challenge themselves and to risk-assess. It can enhance their strength, co-ordination and development of gross and fine motor skills. Babies, toddlers and young children have a right to experience freedom in their *súgradh* (play) and to make choices about with whom, what and where to play, using assistive technologies where appropriate, to support their meaningful participation. By incorporating assistive technology thoughtfully and intentionally into early childhood education, educators can create inclusive learning environments that empower all to reach their individual potential. Outdoor experiences, contact with *dúlra* (nature) along with active physical play and movement supports wellbeing. All babies, toddlers and young children are empowered to pursue challenging play experiences in ways that acknowledge and build on their current abilities and strengths.

Table 1: Aims and Learning Goals for Wellbeing

## Wellbeing

Aims	Learning Goals
	Through nurturing relationships within a supportive environment, babies, toddlers and young children will:
<p><b>Aim 1</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will be strong psychologically and socially.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build secure attachments and experience consistent, reciprocal, nurturing relationships that support <i>muinín</i> (confidence) and connectedness with family, <i>cairde</i> (friends), key person, educators and community.</li> <li>• Be confident, independent and develop self-help and self-care skills, particularly in predicting and handling transitions.</li> <li>• Be empowered to communicate their feelings and emotions to make sense of life experiences, to cope with challenges and to learn to co-regulate and self-regulate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 2</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will be as healthy and as active as they can be.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect and nurture their bodies and promote their <i>sláinte</i> (health) and wellbeing through positive attitudes and choices that value their preferences in relation to nutrition, routines, rest and sleep, hygiene and exercise.</li> <li>• Use their bodies to move, be active, and experience, explore, and extend their physicality through inclusive environments, indoors and outdoors, through <i>súgradh</i> (play) and <i>spraoi</i> (fun) experiences that encourage practice, challenge, adventure and mastery, using assistive technology where appropriate.</li> <li>• Evaluate, experience and manage risk and adventure, including being <i>misniúil</i> (brave) and learning about body safety, through participation and engagement in the indoor and outdoor learning environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 3</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will be creative, spiritual and compassionate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be <i>cineálta</i> (kind) and <i>fiosrach</i> (curious), deep thinkers and reflective learners.</li> <li>• Be creative and take the initiative to explore, respond to and express themselves through art, drama, dance and music, experiencing the power, joy, excitement, beauty, potential and relevance of the arts.</li> <li>• Enhance their spirituality through nurturing their sense of <i>ionadh</i> (wonder), awe, stillness and gratitude and through respecting ethnicity, culture, traditions, festivals, rituals and <i>dúlra</i> (nature).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 4</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will be agentic global citizens and have positive outlooks on learning and on life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate agency and express choices, preferences and make decisions for themselves and their communities whilst respecting diversity, equity and inclusion.</li> <li>• Develop holistically and show a sense of mastery and belief in their own abilities, take learning risks, and display learning dispositions such as determination, perseverance, independence, resilience, empathy, compassion and resourcefulness.</li> <li>• Explore and identify their place in the world, and be empowered to live sustainably as agentic, respectful, caring and compassionate global citizens with rights and emerging responsibilities.</li> </ul>

## Identity and Belonging

**The Theme of Identity and Belonging is about babies, toddlers and young children having a positive sense of who they are. It involves knowing they are valued and respected as part of their family and community, and feeling supported by a sense of *meitheal* (community spirit of coming together).**

From birth babies, toddlers and young children develop a sense of who they are. Relationships with family members, key person, other educators, *cairde* (friends), peers and members of their community play an important role in building their identities. Babies, toddlers and young children have multiple identities. Their sense of who they are is shaped by their experiences and their environments, as well as their understanding of themselves, their family and others in their local and global communities. Belonging is about babies, toddlers and young children having a secure relationship, a feeling of *aoibhneas croí* (gladness of heart) with people in their life. When babies, toddlers and young children feel a sense of belonging and a sense of *bród* (pride) in their families, *cairde* (friends), peers, and in communities, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured, resilient and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. A sense of identity and belonging creates an important foundation for early learning and development.

*Aistear* supports giving babies, toddlers and young children messages of *meas* (respect), *grá* (love) and encouragement. This gives them a positive sense of who they are and *muinín* (confidence) in knowing that their voice is listened to, heard and responded to. These messages also give them *muinín* (confidence) to express their views and opinions, to make choices, and to help shape their own learning. *Aistear* embraces diversity and encourages educators to reflect on their practices to ensure all babies, toddlers and young children have equitable experiences and can participate meaningfully. This includes babies, toddlers and young children with language diversity, neurodiversity, and any additional needs related to their ability or background. Reflection supports educators in developing insights, self-awareness and skills to empower babies, toddlers and young children to develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. This helps ensure all babies, toddlers and young children are respected and valued and that they can recognise and be empowered to respond proactively to stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

Table 2: Aims and Learning Goals for Identity and Belonging

## Identity and Belonging

Aims	Learning Goals
	Through nurturing relationships within a supportive environment, babies, toddlers and young children will:
<p><b>Aim 1</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will have strong self-identities and will be respected and celebrated as unique individuals with their own life stories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build respectful and caring relationships with others and appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of self and others.</li> <li>Feel <i>bród</i> (pride) and <i>muinín</i> (confidence) in coming to know their own <i>scéal</i> (story), history, culture(s), identities and home language(s).</li> <li>Feel valued and see themselves and their interests and identities reflected in the environment, knowing that their ideas, preferences, needs and rights, as well as those of their <i>cairde</i> (friends) and peers, are noticed and responded to with <i>meas</i> (respect), empathy and consistency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 2</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will have a sense of group identity with <i>cairde</i> (friends), peers, educators, their family and community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know that they have a place and a right to be part of the group, instinctively recognising that they, and the important people in their lives, are welcomed, included and celebrated.</li> <li>Be able to share personal experiences about their own families, backgrounds and culture(s), and come to know, understand and celebrate the diversity of family structure, ways of living, customs, traditions and festivals.</li> <li>See themselves as part of the community by coming to know the features and people of the locality, to know their responsibility to care for and look after the environment and know <i>meitheal</i> (community spirit of coming together) in their lives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 3</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will express their rights and will be supported to develop an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know there is a space where they can be at ease, communicate their views and feel confident that their voice, in their varying forms, are heard and responded to in all matters affecting them.</li> <li>Begin to understand the rules and boundaries of relationships, learning to interact co-operatively and help others, as well as knowing they are supported to co-regulate and self-regulate their emotions.</li> <li>Develop a sense of social justice and fairness, be aware of and respect their own and others' needs, rights and feelings while also developing the skills of co-operation, responsibility, negotiation, problem-solving and conflict resolution.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 4</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will see themselves as agentic, competent and confident learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a broad range of abilities and interests, being motivated to achieve by valuing their own unique strengths and ways of learning.</li> <li>Show increasing <i>muinín</i> (confidence) and self-assurance in directing and assessing their own learning and sharing their funds of knowledge with others.</li> <li>Demonstrate dispositions like curiosity, persistence, independence and responsibility through engagement with learning experiences inspired by <i>súgradh</i> (play) and <i>spráúlacht</i> (playfulness).</li> </ul>

## Communicating

**The Theme of Communicating is about babies, toddlers and young children sharing their experiences, thoughts, ideas, feelings, interests, needs and rights with others with growing *muinín* (confidence) and competence in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes.**

Each baby, toddler and young child communicates, participates, contributes, connects and interacts with others in their own way and in their own time. Communicating is a two-way process in which they learn to share experiences and also to interpret what others are sharing with them. Babies, toddlers and young children use multiple ways of communicating, including but not limited to: talking, silences, facial expressions, gestures, behaviours, body movements, crying, cooing, babbling, language(s) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). They may communicate through Irish Sign Language (ISL), Lámh or Braille or express themselves through the arts, mark-making, dance, drama, music, poetry, pictures, writing and stories. By being attuned to the multiple ways babies, toddlers and young children communicate, educators can listen to and interpret what they tell us. Educators support language acquisition so babies, toddlers and young children feel validated, understood, respected and included. *Aistear* creates opportunities for babies, toddlers and young children to learn about their own and other languages and cultures within a multicultural society. This includes learning about the importance of *Gaeilge* (Irish) in our cultural and linguistic heritage.

Babies, toddlers and young children broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of their experiences through language(s) and emergent literacies. A strong foundation in oral language(s) is important. Babies, toddlers and young children also quickly learn about the power and meaning of symbols. They start to comprehend and use a wide vocabulary and make and use symbols to express feelings, thoughts and ideas. An inclusive, print rich environment supports emergent literacy and emergent numeracy and nurtures a *grá* (love) of reading. Over time, the skills of reading, writing and numeracy enrich this experience. Early communicating experiences help babies, toddlers and young children develop positive learning dispositions about languages, literacies, numeracy and communicating.

Through *súgradh* (play) and playful experiences, babies, toddlers and young children can enjoy and benefit from expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively. Music, dance, art and drama awaken joy, freedom and *spraiúlacht* (playfulness), not only for the babies, toddlers and young children, but for the educators too. Sharing and nurturing the processes of creativity and artistic interpretation inspires *muinín* (confidence), resilience and *sonas* (happiness). Experiencing an inclusive and rich communicative environment empowers babies, toddlers and young children to be agentic, competent and confident communicators.

Table 3: Aims and Learning Goals for Communicating

## Communicating

Aims	Learning Goals
	Through nurturing relationships within a supportive environment, babies, toddlers and young children will:
<p><b>Aim 1</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will use multiple ways of communicating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be agentic communicators who influence and initiate interactions, <i>cómhra</i> (conversations) and decisions.</li> <li>Share, recognise, understand, interpret and respond to the many ways humans communicate including but not limited to vocalisations, facial expressions, gestures, body language and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).</li> <li>Combine different communication strategies to express choices, ideas, feelings and opinions, to listen and to learn to respect the choices, ideas, feelings and opinions of others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 2</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will use language(s).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interact and communicate, including using oral language(s), with <i>muinín</i> (confidence) and competence for a range of purposes including but not limited to silences, crying, babbling, chatting, discussing, playing, experimenting, questioning, thinking, taking risks and exploring sound/pattern/rhythm/rhyme/repetition, using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) where appropriate.</li> <li>Interact with others for giving and receiving information, listening and taking turns in <i>cómhra</i> (conversations) and storytelling, clarifying thinking, ideas and feelings, asking questions, refusing, negotiating and problem-solving.</li> <li>Become confident and positive about the national languages of <i>Gaeilge</i> (Irish), English, Irish Sign Language (ISL), their home language(s) and have an awareness and appreciation of other languages.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 3</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of their world through emergent literacy and numeracy experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build awareness of the variety of symbols (pictures, print, numbers, visual supports) used to communicate, and use these in enjoyable and meaningful ways, and realise that these can be understood by others.</li> <li>Experience an inclusive, print-rich environment to promote emergent literacy and numeracy and learn the value of books and digital technologies, where developmentally appropriate, as a source of information to learn about the world.</li> <li>Have opportunities for mark-making. Use a variety of media in a multitude of ways, including but not limited to, the arts and different types of <i>súgradh</i> (play) as ways to interpret and share experiences, to solve problems and to clarify thinking, ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 4</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will express themselves creatively and imaginatively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn to share feelings, thoughts and ideas through different types of <i>súgradh</i> (play) and through playful, inclusive and creative experiences including, but not limited to, the arts, dance, drama, music, song and <i>scéal</i> (story).</li> <li>Communicate and develop emergent literacy and numeracy skills through creative expression using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), where appropriate, and skills such as mark-making, cutting, drawing, transient art, sticking, painting, building, printing, sculpting, threading, sewing and weaving, emphasising the process over product.</li> <li>Develop and show <i>muinín</i> (confidence) in trying out new things, taking risks, problem-solving, thinking critically and expressing themselves in a variety of ways.</li> </ul>

## Exploring and Thinking

The Theme of Exploring and Thinking is about babies, toddlers and young children being *fiosrach* (curious) and making sense of the things, places and people in their world by interacting with others, playing, investigating, thinking, questioning, and forming, testing and refining ideas.

Babies, toddlers and young children use their senses, their minds and their bodies to find out about and make sense of what they see, feel and experience in the world around them. When they feel safe, secure and supported, they enjoy exploring and finding out about their world. The learning environments, indoors and outdoors, provide relevant, meaningful, play-based and hands-on learning experiences for babies, toddlers and young children. Through provocations, inquiry and investigations they build knowledge and understanding, develop schemas, develop new skills and dispositions, and explore and think.

Babies, toddlers and young children enjoy exploring early STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) concepts and ideas and testing these out. They also learn about the past and the influence of history on them and their communities. They learn about geography, about life on land and life in the sea. Through active exploration of their environment, child-initiated play and intentional pedagogies, babies, toddlers and young children learn about their world and come to an awareness and understanding of their role as global citizens in caring for the earth.

Through interacting with others in *súgradh* (play) and hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences, babies, toddlers and young children are empowered to be creative, to take risks, and to make discoveries. They learn how to think critically and to be creative. As they play and interact, they are reflecting on

and assessing their own learning. They retest their theories, taking on board new discoveries and experiences, in an inclusive and accessible learning environment. They may use digital technology, where developmentally appropriate, to support their learning. The benefits of digital technology, both plugged and unplugged experiences, and the internet are balanced alongside the rights and the safety of babies, toddlers and young children. By balancing plugged and unplugged experiences, educators can create a learning environment that harnesses the benefits of digital technology while nurturing holistic learning and development.

All babies, toddlers and young children are *fiosrach* (curious) and have an innate drive to get to know the workings of their world. Educators can foster learning by preparing the environment and by planning a blend of free-play, guided play and educator-led playful experiences and provocations for babies, toddlers and young children through which they can experience success as learners. This means planning experiences that are suited to their individual needs and that connect with their experiences and interests. At the same time, babies, toddlers and young children are introduced to new interests and experiences. They are challenged to extend their knowledge, refine their skills, and work together to solve problems so that they are curious and resilient explorers and creative thinkers.

Table 4: Aims and Learning Goals for Exploring and Thinking

### Exploring and Thinking

Aims	Learning Goals
<p><b>Aim 1</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.</p>	<p>Through nurturing relationships within a supportive environment, babies, toddlers and young children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage, explore and experiment in their environment through integrated artistic, linguistic, musical, geographical, historical and STEM learning experiences.</li> <li>Come to understand concepts such as matching, comparing, ordering, sorting, estimating, counting, spatial awareness, size, weight, height, length, capacity and money through <i>súgradh</i> (play) and playful experiences in an enjoyable and meaningful way.</li> <li>Recognise their connection to and responsibility for the environment and their community and come to know and respect local people, flora and fauna.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 2</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will develop and use skills and strategies for observing, questioning, investigating, understanding, negotiating and problem-solving and come to see themselves as explorers and thinkers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make connections and associations between new learning and what they already know, having the time and space to explore and develop theories about how the world works.</li> <li>Explore a variety of resources, provocations, open-ended and natural materials, as well as digital technologies where developmentally appropriate, to investigate, to research and to find out about the world around them.</li> <li>Collaborate and play with others to share interests, to learn about the past, the present and the future, to solve problems, to be creative and to think logically.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 3</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will have opportunities to learn, to connect with <i>dúlra</i> (nature) and to spend meaningful time in the outdoors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feel a connection and sense of <i>ómós áite</i> (value of place), by being present in <i>dúlra</i> (nature) and having stories, folklore and <i>súgradh</i> (play) merging with local heritage in coming to know the environment in a deeper way throughout the seasons.</li> <li>Develop sensory awareness of colours, shapes, smells, sounds and movement; challenging themselves in adventurous and active play.</li> <li>Learn about life on land and life in water through experiencing, discovering, questioning, engaging, investigating and using digital technologies, where developmentally appropriate, and use books to research and extend knowledge about our planet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 4</b> Babies, toddlers and young children will have positive attitudes towards learning and develop dispositions like independence, curiosity, <i>spráíúlacht</i> (playfulness), perseverance, resilience, <i>muinín</i> (confidence), resourcefulness and risk-taking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate growing <i>muinín</i> (confidence) in being able to do things for themselves, seeing themselves as agentic learners who are open to new ideas and experiences.</li> <li>Develop higher-order thinking skills such as problem-solving, predicting, analysing, questioning and justifying through <i>súgradh</i> (play) and playful explorations.</li> <li>Think together to build meaning and understanding as well as being <i>fiosrach</i> (curious) about how to use letters, words, sentences, numbers, signs, pictures, colour and shapes to give and record information, to describe and to make sense of their own and others' experiences through play and hands-on experiences.</li> </ul>



## Glossary

<b>Agency</b>	Agency for babies, toddlers and young children is being able to make choices about and in their learning. Their agency is evident in the way they practically and emotionally transform the lives of those around them. They influence relationships, decisions and the working of their social worlds.
<b>Agentic</b>	Agentic is when a baby, toddler or young child is empowered and makes choices and decisions for themselves. Being agentic means they have voice and influence over their own learning.  For the educator, being agentic means that they have the freedom to use their knowledge and skills to interpret <i>Aistear</i> to support learning and development of babies, toddlers and young children in their care.
<b>Assistive Technology</b>	Assistive Technology (AT) is any item that supports babies, toddlers and young children's ability to actively participate in their environment. AT may include items like magnification software, interactive touch screens, adapted equipment or switch-operated toys.
<b>Augmentative and Alternative Communication</b>	Communication devices, systems, strategies and tools that replace or support spoken language are known as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). They can be used to enhance or substitute speech. It includes any form of communication besides spoken words used with oral speech or instead of oral speech.
<b>Bias</b>	Prejudice for or against one person or group of people, especially in a way that may be considered unfair.
<b>Bodily autonomy</b>	The right of babies, toddlers and young children to govern what happens to their body.
<b>Circle of security</b>	A circle of security is a trusting and respectful relationship between babies, toddlers and young children, their caregivers, and other important people in their lives, fostering a supportive environment for learning and development.
<b>Consent</b>	Consent is when we seek permission for something to happen or make an agreement to do something or having something done to you. It requires respect and communication from both parties and is an important concept for babies, toddlers and young children to learn about from a young age. Consent includes knowledge about, and respect for, their own and others' boundaries.
<b>Co-regulate/ co-regulation</b>	Caring, responsive interactions that provide the support and modelling to babies, toddlers and young children to understand, express and process their thoughts, emotions and behaviours.
<b>Curriculum</b>	All the experiences, formal and informal, planned and unplanned in the indoor and outdoor environment that babies, toddlers and young children experience.
<b>Curriculum framework</b>	A scaffold to curriculum development to help educators plan and develop an emergent, inquiry-based, child-led curriculum underpinned by play and relationships and specific to their own context.
<b>Digital technologies</b>	Digital technologies refer to electronic tools and devices. This includes but is not limited to computers, tablets, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools, digital cameras, specialised software, Assistive Technologies, light boxes, microscopes, overhead projectors, microphones, speakers, mobile phones and the internet. Digital technologies may involve plugged and unplugged experiences (see below).

<b>Discrimination</b>	Includes policies, practices or behaviours that lead to unfair treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of their identity or perceived identity. It can be intentional or unintentional and may be direct or indirect.
<b>Dispositions</b>	Dispositions are character traits that babies, toddlers and young children possess from birth and are unique to each individual. Dispositions are influenced, both positively and negatively, by interactions and relationships, and the lived experience of babies, toddlers and young children. A disposition is the tendency to respond to situations in characteristic ways.
<b>Diversity</b>	Diversity is about all the ways in which people differ, and how they live their lives as individuals, within groups, and as part of a wider social group. It is about welcoming and valuing difference as part of life. It is about respecting and celebrating differences while also noticing and valuing our similarities and connectedness.
<b>Emergent and inquiry-based curriculum approach</b>	An approach to learning and development that uses babies, toddlers and young children's interests, curiosity, questions and experiences as starting points of inquiry. This includes the interests of educators and the wider community. Babies, toddlers and young children's engagement with people, materials, ideas and events triggers their curiosity and motivation to learn. It supports them to investigate and research through playing, experimenting, questioning, conversations and thinking.
<b>Emergent literacy</b>	Babies, toddlers and young children develop a growing understanding of language(s) and print as a foundation for communicating, reading and writing. Literacy in early childhood involves the development of communication and language and the exploration and development of literacy skills, concepts, knowledge and understanding. Through play and hands-on experiences, babies, toddlers and young children see and interact with print as they become curious about and build an awareness of its functions and conventions, and learn they can be understood by others.
<b>Emergent numeracy</b>	Babies, toddlers and young children develop a growing understanding of mathematical concepts in the world around them. Numeracy in early childhood involves the exploration and development of mathematical skills, concepts, knowledge and understanding. Through play and hands-on experiences, babies, toddlers and young children see and interact with concepts such as number, shape and space, size, volume, etc. as they become curious about and build an awareness of their functions and purpose.
<b>Equality</b>	Equality refers to the importance of recognising, respecting, and engaging with the diversity of individuals and group needs, and of ensuring equality in terms of access, participation, conditions and benefits for all babies, toddlers and young children and their families.
<b>Equity</b>	Equity is primarily about fairness and being fair to, and with, all babies, toddlers and young children. This means treating babies, toddlers and young children fairly in their interactions and learning experiences in early childhood.
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Ethnicity refers to a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion or language. Ethnicity includes babies, toddlers and young children's identification with a group having some or all of the following shared characteristics: culture, food, language, forms of dress, religion, lifestyle, traditions, customs and nationality. An ethnic group is a group that sees itself or is regarded by others as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics that help distinguish it from other groups.

<b>Funds of knowledge</b>	Funds of knowledge refers to the valuable skills, knowledge and interests that babies, toddlers and young children learn from their families and communities. This can include things like cooking, gardening, shopping, farming, storytelling and cultural traditions. Educators use this information to nurture and extend early learning and development through providing meaningful learning experiences and provocations that connect with the everyday lives of babies, toddlers and young children.
<b>Influence</b>	Refers to the views and opinions of babies, toddlers and young children having a meaningful impact on decisions that affect their learning and development.
<b>Inquiry-based learning</b>	Encouraging babies, toddlers and young children to explore, ask questions, think critically, problem-solve, investigate topics of interest, construct and progress their own understanding and knowledge and to be curious and creative.
<b>Intentional pedagogies</b>	The purposeful actions of educators to facilitate, support and extend babies, toddlers and young children's learning experiences, needs, interests, ideas, skills and strengths.
<b>Key person approach</b>	The key person approach ensures each baby, toddler and young child, is assigned a named person, this may be an early years educator and/or childminder, who is primarily responsible for creating a close relationship with them and their families.
<b>Lámh</b>	A manual sign system used by children and adults in Ireland with intellectual disability and communication needs.
<b>Multicultural</b>	A variety of people or groups from different cultures or ethnicities.
<b>Open-ended materials</b>	Open-ended materials are materials that can be used in numerous ways indoors and outdoors by babies, toddlers and young children. They can be moved, carried, combined and redesigned in any way the baby, toddler or young child decides. These materials can be natural or manufactured and can be sourced in several ways from nature, the home and other recycled materials.
<b>Parent</b>	'Parent' refers to mothers, fathers and those with parental responsibility in different parenting relationships. This may include foster parents, adoptive parents, step-parents, legal guardians and carers.
<b>Participation</b>	Babies, toddlers and young children are involved in decision-making, their views are listened to, taken seriously and given due weight with the intention of leading to an outcome or change.
<b>Pedagogy</b>	This refers to all the educator's actions or work in supporting babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development. It infers a negotiated, respectful and reflective learning experience for all involved.
<b>Plugged experiences</b>	These type of experiences are called 'plugged' as the materials need power to work. Some examples of plugged experiences in early childhood may include the use of digital cameras, digital storytelling, digital microscopes, robotics or light boxes.
<b>Provocations</b>	Provocations are resources that are set out and/or set up to spark curiosity and engagement. They may be open-ended or focused on a specific interest or learning goal. Provocations can be touched, explored, manipulated and inquired about as part of free-play, guided-play or educator-led playful experiences.

<b>Rights-based</b>	An understanding of babies, toddlers and young children as rights-holders who are provided with meaningful opportunities to influence decisions about their lives.
<b>Self-regulate</b>	This is the developing ability of a baby, toddler or young child to begin to understand and manage behaviours, reactions and emotions and continues to develop into adulthood.
<b>Slow relational pedagogy</b>	This involves taking time and being present to nurture supportive, stable, warm relationships that promote secure attachments with caregivers, healthy and safe environments and meaningful learning experiences for babies, toddlers and young children.
<b>Social justice</b>	Social justice is the fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges within a society, ensuring that all individuals have equal access to basic needs and opportunities.
<b>Spirituality</b>	Spirituality is concerned with love for life, others, and a sense of connection with oneself, others, nature, the world and, for some, a larger purpose or higher power. It involves personal beliefs and practices that may or may not be linked to organised religion.
<b>Stillness</b>	Stillness is about being quiet, calm and focused. It is about noticing and being in the wonder of the present moment.
<b>Strengths-based approach</b>	A strengths-based approach focuses on babies, toddlers and young children's personal strengths and capabilities in a holistic way, seeing what they 'can' do, and using these strengths to support progression in their learning and development.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Babies, toddlers and young children learning to care for themselves, others and the environment.
<b>Transient art</b>	A form of creative expression that involves using open-ended materials to create non-permanent artworks.
<b>Traveller</b>	The Irish Traveller Community also known as Travellers, Mincéir or Pavee are an indigenous traditionally nomadic ethnic minority group originating in Ireland. Travellers were formally recognised by the state in 2017 as a distinct ethnic group in the Irish nation. As with all ethnic groups, the Traveller community is diverse and not homogeneous.
<b>Unplugged experiences</b>	These experiences are called 'unplugged' as the materials do not need power to work. These experiences are hands-on and tactile encouraging play, creativity, problem-solving and social interaction. Babies, toddlers and young children use, inquire and experiment with a range of materials to figure out what they do and how they work, for example playing with magnets, blocks or jigsaws. Unplugged also includes experiences with real world digital tools and resources such as calculators and weighing scales to enhance developmentally appropriate learning experiences. These experiences lay the foundation for digital literacy and mathematical skills such as problem-solving, sequencing and spatial reasoning.
<b>Voice</b>	The many ways babies, toddlers and young children express their views, feelings and emotions including but not limited to talking, silences, cries, utterances, facial expressions, actions, reactions, eye-movements, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, song, mark-making, the arts and conversations.

